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PHILOSOPHICAL PAPERS.

N. A. NICHOLSON.

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PHILOSOPHICAL PAPERS.

BY

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" Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri
Quo me cunque rapit tempestas deferor hospes."

HORACE.

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REGIA
MONACENSIS.

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The Author wrote the papers not marked with an asterisk, he also translated the Problem.

PREFACE.

"COME, brothers," said Peter, "fall to and spare not, "here is excellent good mutton; or hold, now my hand "is in, I will help you." At which word he carves out two good slices of a loaf, and presents each on a plate to his brothers.

"My lord," said one, "I can only say, To my eyes, "and fingers, and teeth, and nose, this seems to be no- "thing but a crust of bread;" upon which the other put in his word, "I never saw a piece of mutton in my "life so nearly resembling a slice from a twelvepenny "loaf."

"Look ye, gentlemen," cries Peter in a rage: "to "convince you what a couple of blind, ignorant, wilful "puppies you are, I will use but this plain argument, "By God it is true, good, natural mutton, as ever "came out of Leadenhall Market, and God confound

"you both eternally if you offer to believe other-
"wise."—*Tale of a Tub.*

The author of the following papers does not pretend either to use, or to answer this plain argument, which is still rather too common amongst us, nor does he pretend to any certainty in the subjects which he treats of; he puts forward what he *believes* to be true, leaving to his readers to judge whether it *is* true or not.

Those who ought to be calm and happy in the possession of what they believe to be Divine truth, but who have lately acted as if they were neither the one nor the other, might remember with advantage what the town-clerk said of old: "Ye men of Ephesus,
"what man is there that knoweth not how the city of
"the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess
"Diana, and of the image which fell down from
"Jupiter? *Seeing then that these things cannot be*
"*spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do*
"*nothing rashly.*"

AUTHORITY.

AUTHORITY FROM JEREMY BENTHAM.

THE following extract is taken from the fallacies of Jeremy Bentham:

"He who in place of reasoning employs authority, "makes no secret of the opinion he entertains of his "hearers, or his readers; he assumes that those to "whom he addresses himself are incapable, each of "them, of forming a judgment of their own.

"If they submit to this insult, may it not be pre- "sumed that they acknowledge the justice of it?

"Of imbecility, at any rate of self-conscious and "self-avowed imbecility, proportionate humility ought "naturally to be the result.

"On the contrary, so far from humility, of this "species of idolatry, of this worshipping of dead "men's bones, all the passions the most opposite to "humility, pride, anger, obstinacy, and overbearing- "ness, are the frequent, not to say the constant, "accompaniments.

"With the utmost strength of mind that can be "displayed in the field of reasoning, no reasonable "man ever manifests so much heat, assumes so much, "or exhibits himself disposed to bear so little as

" these men, whose title to regard and notice is thus
" given up by themselves.

" Whence this inconsistency? Whence this vio-
" lence? From this alone, that, having some abuse
" to defend, some abuse in which they have an
" interest, and finding it on the ground of present
" public interest indefensible, they fly for refuge to
" the only sort of argument in which so much as the
" pretension of being sincere in error can find coun-
" tenance. By authority, support, the strength of
" which is proportioned to the number of persons
" joining in it, is given to systems of opinions at once
" absurd and pernicious—to the religion of Buddh,
" of Brama, of Foh, of Mahommed. And hence it
" may be inferred that the probative force of authority
" is not increased by the number of those who may
" have professed a given opinion, unless, indeed, it
" could be proved that each individual of the mul-
" titudes who professed the opinion possessed in the
" highest degree the means and motives for ensuring
" its correctness."

TRUTH.

TRUTH.

TRUTH is the assertion of that which is, that which has been, or that which will be; till an assertion has been made there can be no truth; it does not exist without some assertion, either expressed or understood.

There are two kinds of truth, the asserting that that which is, is, &c., and the asserting, that that which is not, is not; the one may be called positive and the other negative truth.

The contrary of truth is the asserting that that which is, is not, or that that which is not, is; and so all through, that that which has been has not been, or that that which has not been has been, &c.

The contrary of truth is called falsehood; truth and falsehood are found precisely in the same dress and with the same appearance: both are assertions, the one affirming that that which is, is, the other affirming that that which is not, is, &c.

Truth is truth still, whether we believe it to be so or not; it is quite independent of anything but the one single assertion necessary to its existence. When Columbus told the Spaniards and the world of

the existence of a new country, neither the Spaniards nor the world believed him, but yet what he said was true, just as much before he started as after he returned; the new country spoken of is there all the time Columbus asserts that it is, but no one believes him till they have proofs that it is. A child can assert that that which is, is, as well as a grown-up man; a grown-up man as well as a hundred grown-up men. The assertion of any particular individual with regard to any either real or supposed event, is called the evidence of that individual.

We have not been given the power of knowing all that which is, has been, or will be; we can therefore only find out the truth of any assertion by the careful examination of the evidence which can be adduced to support it; and when our fellow-men come forward with an assertion, we ask at once what evidence can you bring us to support what you say; how are we to know that what you assert is, has been, or will be? If we consider the evidence sufficient to make us believe the assertion, it becomes truth to us, although it may really not be so, although it does not happen, never did happen, or will not happen. We may here observe that those assertions which imply a contradiction, such as the part is greater than the whole, &c., prove their own falsehood themselves; we do not ask for evidence in their case. Now when men come forward with their evidence to corroborate an assertion in order to give that evidence its proper value, we must ask and answer two questions in our own minds—

Firstly, is it likely that these men have been

deceived themselves, though they are honorably asserting what they believe to have taken place?

Secondly, is it likely that they may, for their own reasons, wish to deceive us, and consequently assert what they know never took place?

If we make up our minds that the witnesses have neither been deceived themselves nor wish to deceive us, we are satisfied with the evidence, and we believe the original assertion to be true.

If we find, however, something very unusual and out of the common way asserted, we shall require a much larger amount of the clearest evidence to believe the assertion to be true, for we must ask ourselves then, Is it not much more likely that these witnesses have been deceived themselves, or may have wished to deceive us, than that so strange and unusual an occurrence as they assert to have taken place, did actually take place? And the more strange and the more unusual the assertion put forward is, the more clear and undeniable in its nature must the evidence be which is to corroborate that assertion, and induce us to believe it to be true.

The assertion of that which has been is the truth of the past, and the nearer the past is to our own time, the more easy it is for us to examine the evidence which we require to make us believe assertions made with regard to it, for evidence can be much more easily collected when an assertion is made as to an event which took place a few months ago than when an assertion is made as to an event which took place several hundred years ago. In both cases the most careful examination of the evidence

adduced to support the assertion is necessary, and after this examination we may differ: one man may think the evidence sufficient, another may think it is not sufficient, so that what we commonly call the truth of the past is the assertion of that which we believe to have taken place, after a careful examination of all the evidence which we can collect relative to that assertion.

The assertion of that which will be is the truth of the future; we can only guess at that which will be from what we believe to have been; that is to say, we can only judge what the future will be from what the past has been. The sun has risen x mornings, it will rise to-morrow morning; all men, except those now living, have died; I shall die. With regard to the truth of the future then, if we are satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to prove a certain kind of past, we may form an inductive argument from the frequency of those past instances that something like them will happen. The only *certainty* that we have with regard to the future is that some change will take place; what that change will be we can guess from those that have taken place, and *no more*. Therefore, in the truth of the past and the truth of the future evidence is alike necessary to us; in the first case to establish the truth of what has been, in the second, to furnish us with an inductive argument as to what the future is likely to be.

With regard to the assertion of that which is, or the truth of the present, we may consider any assertion. The soul is immortal, or the world is round, &c., and we ask what evidence is there to support what is here asserted; how do you know that the soul is

immortal? how do you know that the world is round? When the evidence is carefully examined, some may consider it sufficient and others insufficient, it rests with each individual to decide. We require evidence, then, to make us believe any assertion, whether it relates to the past, the present, or the future; but the truth itself remains unaltered, whatever be the evidence adduced; that which is, is, however many men may be found to come forward and testify that that which is, is not. When Galileo was forced to sign a declaration that the world did not move, to suit the religious convictions of the age in which he lived, he felt that truth, once it is asserted, is independent of further evidence; he thought, "Whether I sign this declaration, or whether I do not, in spite of St. Peter himself, and every one of his lineal representatives, the earth does move," so he gently whispered, "E pur si muove," as he laid down the pen.

Truth does not exist without some assertion being made, but once an assertion is made, provided it be but true, it remains so, whatever evidence may from circumstances be adduced to prove it to be false. We must therefore distinguish between what we *believe* to be the truth, and what actually *is* the truth independent of our belief; "vera propositio id quod res "est, dicit," says Aldridge, not "id quod rem esse "credimus." We must consider the single evidence of one man more likely to be mistaken than the united evidence of many, but neither the evidence of one man nor the evidence of any number of men can alter that which is, has been, or will be, whatever we may find ourselves constrained to believe.

We only receive evidence with regard to any assertion, because we have no other means of ascertaining the truth of that assertion; a being who is supposed to know all things never looks for evidence, and the Evangelist had this idea in his mind when he said of Christ, that "He needed not that any should testify to Him of man, for He knew what was in man."

A hundred men assert to us that they saw a very unusual thing happen. If they be good men and true, we may very possibly believe their evidence, because we think their being deceived themselves so very unlikely, that it is more unlikely than the occurrence of the thing which they assert to have happened, yet that which they assert as having taken place, may not have taken place in reality, although they believe that they saw it and we believe that they saw it; on the other hand, a child of five years old may assert that a very unusual thing happened, and we may very probably think that the child was deceived and not believe his assertion, yet this very thing may have happened although we do not believe it did.

Evidence therefore may cause us to believe that an occurrence took place which really never did take place, but we believe it did, because we cannot resist the evidence adduced in proof of it.

In a question as to evidence we must deal with the original assertors only, that is to say, those who first made the assertions and endeavoured to prove their truth, we must not consider that, because other men quite unconnected with the matter believed these assertions, their belief is to be considered as evidence, for if we once admitted that the assertions of a small

number of men could be in any way strengthened by the number of people that believed them and were prepared to assert their truth, we should be obliged to admit the truth of almost all the extraordinary assertions made in times past. For every wonderful assertion has had no want of believers, multitudes have been found ready to believe, and their readiness of belief is often cited as a proof of the truth of the assertions which they believed, whereas it tells neither for nor against the truth of the assertions, which must simply be repeated as they were first made, and which depend solely on the evidence which the original assertors were able to bring forward, in order to prove their assertions to be true.

Each man must make up his mind for himself whether the evidence, originally given by the people immediately concerned, is sufficient, and never consider who believed the original assertions, when remade to them at different intervals of time. Are Mahommetanism or Bhuddism more true because numbers have believed them, and must not those who wish to examine into their truth, or falsehood, discard the consideration of how many people believed them, and examine their origin, to try and find out who the few were, who made the first assertions relative to them, and whether those few were worthy of belief, or not?

Mahommed is not God's Apostle because thousands of Mahommetans for years have firmly asserted that he is, nor is he in any way nearer to being so. Those who wish to make up their minds whether he was an Apostle of God or not must read the history of

Mahommed's own time, and come to a conclusion from the evidence of a few people immediately connected with him, and so with any Apostle we can name. It is not from the belief of thousands of people, who have lived since the time of any particular individual, that we must come to a conclusion as to whether that individual was an Apostle or not, but it is from carefully examining the evidence of the man's own time, how many of those immediately about him considered him to be an Apostle, what kind of men were these, &c.? Evidence must be taken fresh from the original witnesses, and not at second hand from the belief of other people who believed what was asserted to them. Each man, then, must decide for himself in all cases where very extraordinary and unusual things are asserted to have taken place; he ought to have nothing to do with what other men like himself (that is, equally unconnected with the matter in question) believed, or disbelieved; he must examine the evidence of those only who from circumstances were entitled to give it on the matter and never even inquire who believed that evidence, for if he once begins to lay stress on the number of believers, he will find that every mythological history has plenty of believers to show.

Many a learned Brahmin, many an Eastern sage, many an early father, will pass in procession before him—Ἑκας ἑστε βεβηλοι, let him cry; who made you judges without appeal as to whether certain original assertions are true or not?

If I can find no evidence for these assertions but that thousands such as you believed them, I can form no opinion of their truth or falsehood; you are only

like myself, and can only be judges for yourselves of the truth of these assertions; do not ask me to believe them because you believed them, but lay the evidence before me which induced you to believe them, and let me judge for myself; if I consider the evidence satisfactory, I cannot help believing it, for I can find out truth by evidence only, and the man who refuses to believe in evidence at all is just as great a fool as the man who believes all that is required of him without question.

All assertions, then, which do not imply a contradiction depend on evidence, and it is by the examination of the evidence adduced that we make up our minds whether we are to think them true or false, although their truth or falsehood is quite independent of any evidence once the assertions themselves are made, for we may be altogether mistaken in the conclusions we draw from the evidence brought before us.

EXPERIENCE.

EXPERIENCE.

A CAUSE is any change which is found by observation to bring about some other change, as it takes place itself.

An effect is any change brought about by a cause.

Cause and effect are the necessary sequence of those changes which depend on each other.

Experience is that knowledge of cause and effect which is derived from the observation of changes.

Experience is therefore a thing of the past, unchangeable and unalterable. We may gain new experience from continued observation, but once gained, that special experience is ever the same. The "scep-"tic," says Mr. Hume, "justly insists that we have "no other idea of the relation of cause and effect "than that of two objects, which have been frequently "conjoined together; that we have no arguments to "convince us that objects which have in our expe-"rience been frequently conjoined will likewise in "other instances be conjoined in the same manner, "and that nothing leads us to this inference but cus-"tom, or a certain instinct of our nature, which it is

"indeed difficult to resist, but which, like other instincts, "may be fallacious and deceitful." We cannot, therefore, establish by arguments that similar causes invariably produce similar effects, though we practically act as if we can—it is an instinct of our nature to take this proposition for granted; if, then, experience, though it is unalterable, may be fallacious, we cannot justly say that because a statement is contrary to experience it must therefore be necessarily false. "Experience," says Mr. Hume, whom we must often quote in examining this subject, "can be allowed to "give direct and certain information of those precise "objects *only*, and that precise period of time, which "fell under its cognizance;" so that the experience of each successive age, as it depended on the means of observation which were possessed in that age, must necessarily have been often different; what was supposed by the most competent persons to be most valuable experience three hundred years ago, may cease to have any value at all in the present age; other experience equally unalterable takes its place, to be perhaps dropped in its turn, from a still more extended observation.

Each age of men has had its own experience, and that experience *only* can be called general which fully and completely agrees with the recorded experience of each age taken separately; for if there is any exception, if the recorded experience of any age of men is contrary, the experience manifestly ceases to be general.

For instance, we cannot justly say that general experience is contrary to any violation of the laws of

nature having taken place, for the recorded experience of several past ages informs us that such violations have taken place; we can only say that the experience of the last two or three centuries is contrary to them; but surely it would be but poor reasoning if we were to say that, because a certain event has not happened during the past three hundred years, it therefore never has happened and never will happen. Experience, like virtue, is worth any price, but we must confine it to those precise objects only, and that precise period of time, which fell under its cognizance.

General experience applies to matters about which all ages of men have been always agreed—for instance, that men die; and though it may possibly be fallacious, it very seldom is so, as each age can correct the observations of the preceding one, if such correction should be found necessary; but where experience is not general, we cannot make use of the particular experience of any one age as an argument against the probability of events stated to have taken place in some other age; for instance, we cannot say that general experience has established that no violation of the laws of nature is possible; we may say that the experience of the past two or three centuries has established that no such violations did take place during that time, but we cannot argue from this that such events never took place, any more than we can argue that they never will take place in any future age. That a dead man should come to life, is a violation of the laws of nature; but can we say with Mr. Hume that this has *never* been observed in *any* age or country, when the recorded experience of several ages

and races of men informs us that such events have taken place?

Certainly not; general experience is by no means contrary to such an event as a dead man coming to life, though our own particular experience may be very decidedly against it. The confounding together general and particular experience leads the philosopher easily into error; for instance, Mr. Hume says in another place, "It is *experience only* which gives authority to human testimony, and it *is the same experience* which assures us of the laws of nature. The first of these assertions is perfectly true; general experience gives authority to human testimony, for men in all ages and all times have had no other means of finding out what has taken place; but the second assertion is true only of our own particular experience during a limited time, for general experience does not assure us of the laws of nature.

The influence, then, which the experience gained in our own time exerts over our minds cannot be so great as the influence and authority which general experience has given to evidence; that is to say, that evidence, being based upon *general* experience, may induce us to believe assertions which are contrary to our own experience, and we thus arrive at Mr. Hume's plain consequence, "That no evidence is sufficient to "establish the truth of any statement, unless the evi- "dence be of such a kind that its falsehood would be "more improbable than the truth of the statement "which it endeavours to establish."

If we are asked to believe any very unusual and extraordinary statement, and the very best evidence is

adduced to establish its truth, we come at once into the presence of two improbabilities, the one the inherent improbability of the statement being true, the other the inherent improbability of the evidence adduced being false, either from the witnesses being deceived themselves or from their wishing to deceive us.

Whichever of these improbabilities we consider to be the least will command our belief, if we make up our mind on the case at all; either the statement, however unusual or extraordinary it be, is true, or the evidence adduced is false, from the witnesses being deceived themselves or from their wishing to deceive us.

The more unusual and extraordinary the statement is—that is to say, the more it runs counter to the experience of our own age—the greater must the weight of the evidence be which those who wish to establish its truth have to bring forward.

In such cases weight in matters of evidence is a very different thing from mere numerical amount; an ignorant multitude may be very easily deceived while a few educated knaves may wish to deceive them; to get an effective weight of evidence we must call in witnesses of education and character, men who are neither likely to be deceived themselves nor to wish to deceive others.

Cardinal De-Retz did not want for witnesses to testify to the celebrated miracle which he relates; the numerical amount of evidence was enormous. But what was the weight of that evidence? Were the witnesses likely people to be deceived themselves? Had they any reason for wishing to deceive others?

General experience gives authority to evidence, for we never have had any other means of getting at the truth in such matters as we are not concerned in personally; but the particular experience of our own age, if it bring us to a different conclusion from that which any particular evidence seeks to establish, will make us very cautious about believing that evidence to be true; we have a natural feeling in favour of the experience of our own age, though, at the same time, we know that a great weight of evidence can outweigh that experience.

Statements connected with men's religion, though in reality they stand or fall on the same grounds as statements connected with their other affairs, are treated quite differently. Men are ready to accept such statements as true upon evidence which would be ludicrously insufficient in any other case. "Intel-
"lectus humanus," says Lord Bacon, "in iis quæ semel
"placuerunt (aut quia recepta sunt, et credita, aut quia
"delectant), alia etiam omnia trahit ad suffragationem
"et consensum cum illis: et licet major sit instan-
"tiarum vis et copia, quæ occurrunt in contrarium;
"tamen eas aut non observat, aut contemnit, aut
"distinguendo summovet, et rejicit, non sine magno
"et pernicioso præjudicio, quo prioribus illis syllepsi-
"bus auctoritas maneat inviolata."

The miraculous conception of the Virgin, for instance, is made to rest on the evidence of a carpenter, who stated that an angel had informed him of it in a dream; he was not even awake when he received the information. Would men listen for a moment to such evidence as this in any other case?

Would they not, one and all, cry out, Either this carpenter was an honest man, and was deceived himself, or he was a knave, and wished to deceive us; either case would be far less improbable than such a thing taking place.

Whatever instance we may select, provided that the statement made concerning it is contrary to the experience of our own age, and is supported by a weight of evidence, we at once find ourselves in presence of two improbabilities, each trying to outweigh the other—the improbability of the statement being true, and the improbability of the witnesses who seek to establish its truth being deceived themselves or wishing to deceive others. We must consider the nature of the statement—how far it is absolutely contrary to the experience of our own age, then the weight of the evidence adduced to establish its truth; we must ask, What sort of men were the witnesses?

If we find that they belong to a superstitious, ignorant, and fanatical race of people, the probability that they were either deceived themselves, if they were honest men, or that they wished to deceive others, if they were knaves, becomes very strong.

Now, all the statements connected with the Christian religion, which are absolutely contrary to the experience of our own age, were originally made in the East; we may, therefore, fairly ask, What has always been the character of the men of those countries?

Has not every traveller, either lay or clerical, who has given us an account of what he saw in the East, enlarged on the credulity, fanaticism, and superstition to be met with there?

Did not Mr. Layard say, in the House of Commons, that in the East all men are liars?

And if they are liars in this enlightened age, may we not conclude that Horace was right when he said, "Credat Judæus apella, non ego," in less enlightened times?

Why, the leopard might as well change his spots as the East be aught but the cradle of credulity and the hotbed of fiction; history tells us that it was so, and it is so at present, whatever the future may reserve for it.

The natural tendency of all uneducated, ignorant people is to believe any statements which are made to them by men who know more than they do themselves; nor does it matter how unusual and extraordinary these statements are, provided that the events which they relate to are brought about by other than human agency; whatever links an ignorant person with the supernatural has a charm not to be found in what links him with the world in which he lives; credulity and superstition, therefore, are not confined to the East only.

We must take the beam out of our own Western eye before we point to the mote in the Eastern one. Table-turning, spirit-rapping, ghost-seeing, clairvoyance, are all to be met with here, sad and serious witnesses to the credulity and superstition of the West. What shall we say of God revealing his will to his servant Joseph Smith, junior, and of the numerous sect of Mormon believers that sprang up in consequence of those revelations?

If, then, both the East and the West stand con-

victed of credulity and superstition, does it follow that we should enshrine ourselves in a general disbelief of all statements made to us?

Certainly not; but when any statements, whether from the East or the West, are absolutely contrary to the experience of our own age, we cannot examine too carefully the evidence adduced to establish their truth, and we should then call to mind Mr. Hume's plain consequence, and it *is* a maxim worthy of our attention, that no evidence is sufficient to establish the truth of any statement unless the evidence be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more improbable than the truth of the statement which it endeavours to establish.

TIME.

TIME.

CHANGE is that succession of alterations, either in position or in constituent parts, which all matter undergoes as it moves.

Change is always going on, slowly in some kinds of matter, rapidly in other kinds, surely in all.

As we see changes succeeding each other in any particular matter, we begin to compare those which we are able to distinguish clearly. Changes, as they succeed each other, are often too minute for us to distinguish; we must then leave out all those intermediate states of change which we cannot distinguish, and continue to observe till we are able to distinguish clearly some new change for the purpose of comparison with the first one which we noticed. For instance, *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*, *f*, are all states of change, with but little difference, and that imperceptible to us; we see some particular matter in a state of change *a*, but when we come to the state of change *f*, *f* seems the same as *a*; we must then continue to observe, and go on with *g*, *h*, *i*, *j*, *k*, until we come to *l*, when, perhaps, we shall be able to distinguish a change clearly and see that *l* is different from *a*.

It is by comparing one state of change with another that we are able to know that any matter is changing; but as the changes which we see going on round us are not all of one length, we can only know by comparing them that they are going on, and that some are faster and some slower than others; nor could we *ever* know more than this had we not been given a fixed standard of motion, by reference to which we can ascertain at what rate any matter is proceeding from one state to another, or from one position to another; this standard is the rate we are ourselves moving at, when apparently at rest, as we go round the earth's axis, or, in other words, each complete revolution of the earth on that axis; this is the ultimate standard to which we refer all changes, whether changes of component parts or changes of position, for the motion of any mass cannot be said to be uniform unless it is found by careful comparison that the units of distance which it passes over, be they small or large, while some other mass moving at a fixed rate passes over certain measured units of distance, are invariably and exactly the same. Now, if we could not discover any mass moving at a fixed rate, how could we possibly have any idea of uniform motion—uniform with what?

Once we are given a mass moving at a fixed rate, we can then discover or contrast other matter the motion of which will be uniform in reference to this fixed rate.

The mass of our earth is moving at a fixed rate as it revolves on its axis, and we determine the rate at which any change is going on by referring it to this standard, in those cases where we require the utmost

accuracy. In obtaining uniform motion, it is quite immaterial whether the matter to be moved moves slow or fast, the actual rate has nothing to say to uniformity of motion; all that must be obtained by careful comparison is, that each and every unit of distance which such matter passes over as it moves, be that unit small or large, while some other mass moving at a fixed rate passes over certain measured and equal units of distance, should be invariably and exactly the same; if they are not, the motion is not uniform. A train, for instance, passes over a mile in one minute, but its motion is not truly uniform unless it passes over the sixtieth part of a mile in each second, and the hundred and twentieth part of a mile in each half second, and so on.

We may construct standards of motion by which to ascertain the rate at which change is going on, but we must always be correcting them by reference to the one fixed standard laid down for us—the motion of the earth on its axis. If we were not revolving at a fixed rate ourselves, how could we know at what rate other masses unconnected with our world were moving? The earth's motion round the sun is not uniform, for it sometimes moves faster and sometimes slower; but we could not know this if the axial revolutions were not always made at one fixed rate.

In order to ascertain the rate at which any mass is moving, we must measure the distance which it is able to accomplish between two apparently fixed points, and compare it with the distance which our standard of motion has accomplished during the passage of that mass between those fixed points; the

distance which any standard of motion, moving uniformly with the one fixed standard, is able to accomplish while any change with regard to any matter whatever is being accomplished, whether that change be a change of position or a change of its component parts, is called the time of that change, and keeping time is measuring any kind of change by comparing it with a standard of motion, so as to ascertain its duration; we may therefore define time to be the ascertained duration of change. In order, then, to bring time into existence, two things are necessary—change, or that which is to be measured, and a fixed rate of motion on the part of the measurers—in order to supply the ultimate standard of motion, or, in other words, the measure to measure with.

As long as these two things exist time will exist with them: it was, is, and is to come.

GOOD AND BAD.

GOOD AND BAD

GOOD AND BAD.

ANYTHING which we call good or bad, must be good or bad relatively to something else, or we could not call it good or bad at all; and what is good relatively to one thing, may also at the same time be bad relatively to another, or *vice versâ*.

Our view then of what is good or bad for mankind, concerns the animal man alone; what is good for men or bad for men, and for men only, however good or bad it may be for any other kind of living thing; but as what is good relatively to one man, may also be bad relatively to another, we cannot acquire a clear idea of what is generally good or bad for the human race, by considering what is good or bad relatively to one individual, or a few individual men, but by trying to find out what is good or bad relatively to the general mass of mankind.

What is good for the masses, what generally tends in the long run to the welfare of all men, is the true foundation stone on which all social rules, of whatever kind they be, ought to be built.

Now, if we believe that there is one great arranger and director of all things, whom we call God, can we

have the presumption to imagine that the ideas of this Being as to what is good or bad with regard to the whole universe of matter which He directs, have such a *very narrow* basis as that which is good or bad for one particular kind of animal, which has not even a fixed star or sun for its dwelling, but a planet, and that planet not the largest in the system of which it forms one? No! all that we can say, is, this is good for mankind, for it tends in the long run to their welfare; this is bad, for it does the contrary: if we seek to form any more general idea of what is good and bad relatively to men, we shall find that we have no means of doing so, for we have no test to refer our decision to. This is good—good for what? or *vice versâ*. Unless it is good or bad relatively to something, it is not good or bad at all.

If we once clearly establish in our minds that we have no other means of ascertaining what is good or bad for mankind except by the one simple test—*does it tend in the long run to their welfare,* or does *it do the contrary?* we shall not be troubled by the difficulties which caused Epicurus to ask the famous questions which have remained so long unanswered.

Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able?
Then is He impotent.
Is He able but not willing?
Then is He malevolent.
Is He both able and willing?
Whence then is evil?

The great governor of all things has not always consulted the interest of any particular kind of animal,

He has not made *all* His laws and dispositions with a view to the sole benefit of either man or beast; and once we admit that any law or divine disposition exists not in exact accordance with the interest of some particular species, we come at once and by necessity into the presence of evil as far as that species is concerned, or in other words, something which is contrary in the long run to its welfare.

If God had always and in every case made laws and dispositions in the interest of the human race and of it alone, there would, so far as man is concerned, have been no necessity for the epicurean questions, as regards him there would have been no such thing as evil; but, as God has most evidently not always and in every case consulted the interests of the human race in the laws and dispositions which He has seen fit to make, if we call Him benevolent towards man when his legislation is for man's advantage, can we help admitting that He is malevolent with regard to man *in exactly so far* as His laws have been made without regard to man's interest?

In this sense of the words benevolent and malevolent, God is sometimes benevolent and sometimes malevolent towards all His creatures on this earth; for by His laws they must prey on each other, or on vegetable life in order to live themselves, and what is good for the creature that devours, is bad for the creature that is devoured; if God is benevolent in the one case, is He not malevolent in the other? what is good for a pike, is very bad for the gudgeon that chances to form his dinner, and so on from the smallest insect up to the most highly civilized man.

The very origin of evil lies in the fact that God has made His laws without reference to any one special interest in particular, for if God had consulted the interests of the human race alone, there would be no evil possible as far as that race is concerned, everything would then have been *au mieux dans le meilleur des mondes possible*. God Almighty has not taken the welfare of either animal or vegetable life as the sole basis for His universal legislation, life must be sacrificed to keep life alive; and though what makes it healthy and happy, comes from God, what makes it miserable or extinguishes it altogether comes from Him likewise.

"Dans l'opinion des Brames," says M. Dupuis ('Origine de tous les Cultes'), "l'ouvrier, ou le grand "Demiourgos n'est pas séparé, ni distingué de son "ouvrage. Le Monde n'est pas une machine étrangère "à la Divinité, créée, et mue par elle, et hors d'elle; "c'est le développment de la substance divine; c'est "une des formes sous lesquelles Dieu se produit à nos "regards. Qui voit le monde, voit Dieu, autant que "l'homme peut le voir; c'est dans ce magnifique "spectacle que la Divinité nous donne d'elle-même, "que nous avons puisé les premières idées de Dieu, "ou de la suprême. 'Chercher quelque chose au-"delà,' dit Pline, 'est un travail inutile à l'homme, et "hors de sa portèe.' Voilà l'Etre veritablement sacré, "l'Etre éternel, immense, qui renferme tout en lui." God is to be diligently sought for in all His works, and it is through the careful study of those works that we may form some rude, but intelligible ideas of the one great governor and disposer of all that is.

THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

We cannot conceive a being who could alter the past, who could make that which is past, never to have been, for the past, as far as we know, has ceased to exist, it is not, and therefore cannot be altered. With regard to the future, the God who can know all things can know the future, but this very foreknowledge of the future makes it as unalterable as the past.

The past is unchangeable with God, for it is His past will; the future is equally unchangeable, when God has determined what is to happen, for it is His future will.

A future which *must* take place, is just as unalterable as a past which has taken place.

Now, if the future was unalterable, as far as living things are concerned, nothing could ever happen to them that God had not specially arranged Himself, and consequently living things would be but perfect pieces of Divine mechanism, which could not go wrong if they would; if this were the case men would be creatures totally devoid of interest in God's sight, mere machines appointed for a short time to assist in

turning an unchangeable future into an irrevocable past.

Our powers of reasoning and judgment would have been given to us for nothing but to delude us into the belief that we possessed that freedom of action which can alone make us responsible beings, responsible to God for those powers which he has chosen to entrust to us.

If we could act but in one fixed way, who could blame us for doing what we could not help, if it were a bad way? and if it were a good way, who could praise us when we could not do wrong, even if we wished it?

If, then, the future was unalterable, all living things would be the merest machines, executing God's will without the slightest responsibility or the smallest use for the powers which He has given them.

As this is clearly not the case, it seems probable that God determines that part of the future only, which He, in His wisdom, considers as requiring His arrangement, and that He leaves open to living things a certain number of possible futures, giving them a free choice as to which they will take out of the number set before them.

For instance, the movement of animals seems entrusted to the animals themselves, they have been given the power to move, and God knows exactly how they can move, but does not choose to settle for them in what direction they are to go. Look at a swarm of ants as they crawl hither and thither, surely the great Creator is not to be imagined to be amongst them, directing their steps. No! He allowed them

to move, He gave them their laws, and He does not choose to interfere further with them.

God, then, has given to each sort of living thing those powers which He knew that each ought to receive, and He never alters His gifts. He gave the hawk power to prey upon other birds, the pike power to prey upon other fish, to every kind of creature power to act as they please, within the limits which He assigned to them originally; beyond these limits they cannot go, but within them they are perfectly free to act as they please.

The special and distinguishing gift which God has given to man is the power of improvement; this separates him from all other creatures, whose powers are apparently never added to; birds flew just as well three thousand years ago as they do at present, the fish of the Deluge swam just as well as the fish of the present day, man only was given the power of himself adding somewhat to the powers which he originally received. It is this precious gift which kindles hope in our minds; we hope to improve our condition in this present state, and we hope thereby to fit ourselves for some future one, if by any means, as St. Paul says, we might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

There are, then, two kinds of future—the future where the Divine Being considers arrangement to be necessary, and this kind of future is as unalterable as the past, and the future when God does not choose to interfere. He puts before living things a certain limited number of ways of acting, and permits them to choose which way they please; for instance a hawk may eat a starling one day and a thrush the next, he may fly

high or low, he may do anything within those limits which the Creator originally assigned to hawks; God knows exactly what it is possible for a hawk to do, but He does not choose to arrange what the hawk's dinner is to be each day that he lives.

There is, then, an undetermined or open future with regard to the actions of any creature within those limits which God originally assigned to it; for if God wished to determine on this kind of future, as on the other and more important kind of future where His arrangement is necessary, it would likewise become as unchangeable as the past; man and all God's creatures would be completely without responsibility in His sight, even an oyster could not open his shell without that special future having been previously determined on by Almighty God.

We must use the judgment which God has given to us to determine which are the futures where He considers arrangement necessary, and which are the futures which He has left open to His creatures; but if we once determine that the Divine Being has Himself pre-arranged any particular future with regard to men, we must remember that those men cease to be responsible beings with regard to that predetermined future; they were obliged to act in a certain particular way, and they cannot, with any justice, be either praised or blamed for having done so, as they were mere machines appointed to turn an unalterable future into an unalterable past.

Further, if we choose to imagine that God is always watching our insignificance, that He is occupying Himself with the arrangement of our little everyday

actions, we cannot use the judgment which He has given us to praise Him when what we imagine to be His arrangement is clearly for our advantage, without using the same judgment to blame Him when what we imagine to be His arrangement is equally clearly for our disadvantage.

Once we have the *presumption* to imagine that God has settled for us exactly what we are to do, we cease to be responsible beings with regard to these particular actions, and we doubly increase our presumption and show our ignorance of the Divine Being by being forced to make God Himself responsible for what He (in our imagination) has compelled us to do.

How much more simple is it not for us to think that the great Director of all things has given certain powers to man and all his other creatures, and that they are all perfectly free to act as they please within the limits which He originally assigned to them—that God wishes His creatures to be absolutely free within these limits?

God is the Disposer of all that is future, whether it be the inevitable future which He has specially determined on, or whether it be the system of possible futures which He has laid down for His creatures without specially arranging which of them is to become the past. Man, on the other hand, is the disposer of those possible futures, and those only, which God has placed before him; he has only to submit in common with all other creatures to the inevitable future, nor is he subject to either praise or blame with regard to it; with regard to his possible futures, he can choose which he pleases out of those which God has put before him.

and it is this very power of choice which makes him a free agent and a responsible being ; his Creator, having entrusted him with this power, may demand an account from him.

For instance, with regard to the inevitable future, who could either praise or blame men because they must die ?

With regard to the possible future, left open by God Almighty, we do practically both praise and blame men according to their actions, and we thus admit that a free choice has been left open to them within certain limits.

" La plus considérable des objections du fatalisme," says M. Jourdain in his ' Notions de Logique,' " c'est " la contradiction apparente qui existe entre la liberté " et les attributs divins. Les fatalistes soutiennent que " la liberté est contraire—1°, à la prescience de Dieu " parce qu'un acte libre ne saurait être prévu ; 2°, à sa " puissance parce qu'un acte libre échapperait à l'action " providentielle ; 3°, à sa justice et à sa bonté parce que " le libre arbitre est la faculté de faire le mal comme " le bien."

We shall try to answer these objections in the same language in which they have been so well put forward.

1°. Dieu peut prévoir ce qu'il veut. Il ne veut pas prévoir les actes de ses sujets.

2°. La puissance, qui laisse faire, est souvent plus grande que celle qui agit.

3°. Doit on blâmer Dieu parce que les hommes font du mal ?

Non ! ni le louer, parce qu'ils font du bien.

THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN.

(From the 'Daily Telegraph.')

THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN.

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SLOWLY but surely we are feeling back our way to ages of the world's history, such as make antiquity modern and the pyramids things of yesterday. We are, day by day, learning more of a race that inhabited Europe when the stone for the Assyrian bulls was not quarried, and Nimrod had never killed a head of game. The annals of this obscure period, and strange people, are written in a very difficult language; but they are written, and Science is gradually deciphering them. Her books are the bone caverns which have lately been discovered and examined at Brixham, and Gibraltar, in the south of Europe, and central France. It seems to everybody capable of weighing the matter, except Cardinal Wiseman, that in these curious depositories evidences exist to an irresistible and overwhelming extent, proving the remote origin and diffusion of our kind. Central France appears to be richest in this wonderful testimony; for there the relics of savage men have been, and are being, disinterred in several localities. In the valley of the

Vezère, for example, under the cliffs of Laugerie-Haute and Laugerie-Basse, a perfect museum of primeval life has been brought to light. Geologists are able to tell us, with almost absolute certainty, the division of the race to which the early tenants of these caverns belonged; what creatures inhabited the wild and rude earth on which they lived; which of them they slew for their food; with what instruments they slew them; how they sucked the marrow and scraped the bones; how they made the bones into daggers, harpoons, and needles, and the sinews into thread and cord. Geologists can even assure us that these primeval ancestors of polished Europe had their notions of art, carved the handles of their weapons into figures and arabesques, and made whistles of the "phalanges" of their victims. The oldest specimen of stone engraving—a deer-like animal scratched upon a slate—has been discovered in Les Eyzies, one of these localities; and on another "plate" is the profile of a human head. Side by side with the human remains of those who lived the dark and dismal life of this period are found bones of the horse, ox, chamois, reindeer, ibex, birds, and fishes, heaps of horn, some of it marked with a saw, and the charcoal of the fires where the food was cooked and the rude manufactures pursued. And all this was before metal was known. Not a trace of copper or iron is to be found. The saw was a stone saw, and the implements of hunting and fishing are sharp fragments chipped from flints, and fashioned into spear-heads, arrow-heads, and knives. "Old bones merely—potsherds—chips of flint," sneers Cardinal Wiseman; but Science bids him observe that

the proof of the undisturbed antiquity of the cave-floors is perfect; there are long bones lying with their articulation complete, and vertebræ of reindeer and oxen imbedded in the cinders, detached, but in exact sequence as they fell. One specimen, of absorbing interest, was brought to light at Laugerie-Basse, the backbone of a reindeer, transfixed with a flint spear-head, the weapon incrusted in the vertebræ, which it had pierced through and through.

To what far ages does not such an object lead us? and what is ancient history compared with the time when the *Bos primigenius* roamed in Europe, and this weapon was hurled by the savage ancestor of the Capets? In what woods did his victim graze, whose skeleton, after all these thousand years, is a prize and a lamp to Science? She cannot fix the date when the wild inhabitant of the caverns chipped that spear-head with stolid patience from the flint, fitted it with sinews to a sapling, and went forth to find food for the little jaws that still lie about the floor, with their milk-teeth white and regular. But that it was thousands of years before history commenced is certain, by its record of the strata and the soil. Conceive, then, this naked Gaul of the Dordogne and the Laugeries dragging home to his hole in the rocks the victim that he killed. Did he blow that bone whistle as he approached his home, touched already with the affections and pleasures of humanity? Did his spouse—his she-savage—sit down with a housewife's satisfaction to grind bone-needles and spin sinew-thread out of the prey, while he, struck by the symmetry of the dead creature, copied it upon bone or scratched it upon slate, un-

consciously beginning Art? There is his skull, and there the skulls of his household—not very different from Bacon's or Shakspeare's say the phrenologists. Was there nothing better for him than this dim existence, spent in chipping stones into sharp *spicula*, and shaping horns into stabbing weapons? Those weapons, too, were they ever wet with other blood than that of beasts? Did wars prevail among the races buried with their dinners and dinner-tables in those French caverns? We have a vast period opened up to us under the faintest light. But it *is* light, and it just discloses an epoch that upsets conventional chronology, and tells us that the origin of man is, like his future, a mystery. Here he is found, complete, developed, fully fashioned, in company with extinct animals, and in formations which were once thought to have been deposited before he came into the creation. Immense questions are started by such revelations—questions which a Roman cardinal does well to try to stifle at their birth, but which Religion, that should comprehend and court all truth, has no cause to fear. We may be led from page to page of these new volumes of human records, to see infinite development behind our generation; and there seem endless capabilities and stages before us. We cannot be led to harm, if we are led to veracities, whatever theory they overturn, or whatever views they impugn.

One volume of the series, we are glad to say, has just been deposited in the British Museum. It is a very large collection of fossils, animal and human, from the cave of Bruniquel, in the department of Tarn et Garonne, which was first opened by its proprietor, the

Vicomte de Lastic St. Jal. The cave had a floor which was a perfect mosaic of remains, containing flint and bone instruments, remains of existing and extinct animals, with skulls and other relics of man. Professor Owen was invited to visit it, and he observed and excavated most interesting specimens in person; so interesting, indeed, that he warmly advised the trustees of the Museum to purchase the archæological treasure. The Viscount had offered it already to his own Government, but wars in Mexico and Cochin China have made the Emperor Napoleon economical, and the prize was let slip. Afterwards, when Professor Owen had secured the cave-contents for London, Paris made a higher bid; but the promise was honorably observed, and we shall soon possess these silent proofs of primeval man. They are now in process of examination and description under the same able hands which obtained them for us; and we trust that before long Cardinal Wiseman will be able to scrutinise and denounce them. Geologists and ethnologists who love truth even better than their country, may be permitted to grieve that these specimens will be abstracted from the magnificent collection in France which M. Lartet is studying and describing; but it is impossible not to feel pleasure in the fact that we shall possess here, also, such striking illustrations of the new line of discovery, and we are glad to acknowledge the spirit and enterprise of the administrators of the British Museum.

PRAYER.

PRAYER.

PRAYERS to the Divine power, or requests made to God in order to induce Him to follow some particular course of action grateful to the petitioners, have been customary in every age and country.

We find the Jews offering up their petitions to Jehovah long before they were taught to believe in a future state. Solomon, when dedicating the Temple, asks Jehovah to hear in heaven his dwelling-place. The priest Chrysis, as he walked along the shore grieving over his daughter, prayed to the god of the silver bow to send a pestilence through the Greek camp. Innumerable instances might be cited from the earliest ages down to the present time to prove the universality of the custom.

Men feel their own weakness and infirmities, and they believe the Divinity to be all powerful; what more natural than that they should imagine that such a Being *might* be influenced by their prayers to help them? And this help they often demanded specifically in the particular case where they wanted it; for instance, the Greeks used to pray to Apollo to direct some particular arrow, to Pallas to direct the course of a spear. They did not confine themselves to general petitions, as we do now.

The uneducated man discovers no indelicacy in going over all his wants to his Divinity, and asking Him to satisfy them one by one; such a one is worshipping a Being whom he has created in his own imagination after his own image—an all-powerful man, not a God.

The educated man of the present age is not satisfied to worship a mere personification of himself, with all his own passions and feelings; he seeks to imagine a more perfect Being, who is all powerful, and with whom the determined future is as unalterable as the past. With such a Being, says St. James, there is no variableness, neither any shadow of turning. But now some difficulties arise. The God whom we would worship we believe to be everywhere, to know everything, to be unchangeable and all powerful. A God with such attributes as these needs not to be reminded of the existence of any of His creatures; He must know the exact powers which He has seen fit to give them, He must know what their wants will be, and exactly how far these wants can be supplied according to His laws and dispositions; that they cannot *all* be supplied is perfectly clear, for the special interest of any particular kind of creatures has not formed the basis of the Divine legislation. Now, if the wants of mankind cannot always be supplied, why ask God for anything which He in His wisdom has not seen fit to give? If He is an unchangeable Being, why ask Him to change for our special benefit?

It little matters whether the petition be altogether specific in its nature, like that of the devout Christian who, to prevent mistakes, always prayed for ten thousand a year and a good house in town, or whether

it be the petition of St. Chrysostom, who asks God to fulfil the desires and petitions of his servants as may be most expedient for them, granting them in this world knowledge of His truth, and in the world to come life everlasting.

When men put up petitions to God, whether they be specific or general, they must imagine that their petitions have an influence over His future course of action; for if they really thought that their petitions *could* have *no* influence, they would not put them up to God at all. Praying to the Divinity implies, then, that He is not really unchangeable, but that by prayer and supplication He *may* be induced to change; it is the old Hebrew idea which we find so often—and God repented Him of some action, the perfect unchangeableness of God being incompatible with successful endeavours to get Him to alter the future or to make special exceptions to His general laws.

In the Gospel according to St. Luke we find an explanation of the theory of prayer; after teaching his disciples how to pray, Christ adds, "Which of you " shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at mid-"night, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves, " for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and " I have nothing to set before him? And he from " within shall answer, and say, trouble me not, the " door is now shut, and my children are with me in " bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you " though he will not rise and give him because he is " his friend, yet because of his importunity he will " rise and give him as many as he needeth."

God says He cannot give us something we want. Let us not be deterred by this; let us pray earnestly

and constantly, and sooner than be always listening to our repeated supplications, He will give it to us at last; by our importunity we shall ultimately be successful.

Now, how can we ask God for anything, much less try to annoy Him by repeated supplications, when we believe that He knows exactly what we ought to receive from Him, and that He gives us no more and no less?

We may wish for things that we want, we may hope to obtain them, but we cannot *ask* the Divinity whom we worship for them as long as we believe that He has already settled what we may have and what we may not have. If God be unchangeable, all the prayers that all the saints ever put up cannot alter His purposes; all that we can do with any reason is to thank the God whom we worship for what we have received in this life, while we hope humbly, though we do not ask, for existence in some future life, which we endeavour to prepare for here.

"A regular habit of expressing our gratitude to "God," says Lord Kames, "and our resignation to the "general laws by which He has regulated all matter, "never fails to purify the mind, weaning it from every "unlawful pursuit." The reason why those who make a habit of asking God for what they want believe that their prayers are heard, is that they feel the advantage which they derive from a calm and serious examination of themselves and their affairs, with a view to their future conduct; coming, as they imagine, with a statement into the presence of God himself, they examine more carefully than they would do in any other case the weak points of that statement, they acknowledge more willingly before such a tribunal

their own infirmities and shortcomings, and they thus attain a frame of mind adapted to produce a well-considered course of action; but it is the examination of their previous conduct, induced by this habit of prayer, not the prayers themselves, which benefit the petitioners.

THE SIX CARDINAL VIRTUES.

THE SIX CARDINAL VIRTUES.

JUSTICE.

He who would act right in this world must try to ascertain what his own rights are, and what his fellow-men's rights are. If a man takes what belongs to another man, or injures him in any way, without that man's knowledge or consent, he is unjust; but if he gives to another man what he cannot spare himself, he is unjust also; in the first case he is unjust to his neighbour, in the second to himself. Justice is the securing to each individual in the community the rights which belong to him by the laws or customs of that community.

FAITH.

Faith is the reliance which we place in experienced people; and as we may be experienced in some matters ourselves, we may have faith in our own powers as well as in those of others; but we could not conduct our most ordinary affairs if we were satisfied to act on our own immediate experience only; we trust our very

lives to the experience of others. What reliance do we not place in people whom we never even saw, when we travel by land or sea, when we take the dose which an apothecary compounds for us? We cannot live happily without faith.

HOPE.

The wishing for a future, which we consider suitable to us, is called hope; we all alike can wish for the future which we think will suit us best under the circumstances we are placed in. We are always hoping for some improvement in our condition, and as long as the hope of obtaining it incites us to exertion it is a most useful stimulant to our mind; but once we dwell too much on the future—once we neglect the present, and satisfy ourselves with hoping only—there is nothing more injurious to our onward progress. We must hope for the best, but we must, at the same time, do our utmost to secure it. As Schiller has said—

"Die Hoffnung führt ihn ins Leben ein,
Sie umflattert den fröhlichen knaben,
Den Jüngling locket ihr Zauber-schein,
Sie wird mit dem Greis nicht begraben,
Denn beschliesst er im Grabe den müden Lauf,
Noch am Grabe pflanzt er die Hoffnung auf."

CHARITY.

As a perfect man does not exist, the best of men feel that they are far from being perfect; they know

their own infirmities, and this very knowledge disposes them to make fair allowance for those of others; they feel the difficulties of life themselves, and can, therefore, sympathise with other people.

There are two other qualities, nearly connected with charity, and often mistaken for it. Some men are constantly entertaining their friends, giving them the best dinners, the best wine, &c.; others, again, give away sums of money yearly to the distressed; but neither the one nor the other are necessarily charitable. The hospitable and the generous man may give dinners and give money, without the least disposition to make allowances for the infirmities of their fellow-men. The hospitable man need not even be generous; he may, and often does, entertain his friends, because life would be irksome to him without their society. The generous man is generally hospitable, but is not necessarily charitable; he may give away immense sums, without the least thought on those who benefit by his bounty; though he gives his body to be burned, as St. Paul says, and has not charity, he is nothing. The charitable man, who feels his own infirmities, and consequently makes due allowance for those of others, will be always both hospitable and generous. Charity, then, is the making due allowance for the infirmities of other people; it is the very bond of peace and of all virtues.

TEMPERANCE.

If we are not always trying to be moderate in the indulgence of our natural inclinations, these last are very likely to triumph over our reason and lead us into various excesses. Temperance is the habit of keeping all our natural inclinations within the bounds which our reasoning powers have clearly defined for them, and once the habit is acquired, the feeling of restraint soon wears off, and the habitually temperate person gains more true satisfaction by his self-denial than he would have gained by yielding altogether to his natural inclination. "Every man that striveth for "the mastery," says St. Paul, "is temperate in all "things."

COURAGE.

We cannot be always just without being courageous, and therefore courage may be termed a cardinal virtue, in so far as it enables us to carry out the decrees which justice has pronounced; though we cannot help respecting that determination of mind which renders its possessors superior to the circumstances in which they are placed, however terrible these may be, yet the worst of men may show that they are at least courageous in their sins. Courage does not make men good, but good men will be all the better for being courageous, as they will then be fearless in carrying out their principles.

THE PROBLEM.

THE PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS CONTRADICTIONS, FROM VOLNEY.

The different groups arranged themselves, and a deep silence succeeded the confused murmurs of the multitude; so the lawgiver spoke:

"Chiefs and doctors among the nations,—You see "how up to this day nations, living apart from each "other, have followed different roads. Each believes "that it follows the road which leads to the truth; "and yet, if there be but one road to the truth, and "if men's opinions are so contrary as to which road "it is, it is quite clear that some of them must be "mistaken. If so many men, then, are mistaken, who "will dare to warrant himself free from any possibility "of mistake in this matter? Begin by being indulgent "towards each other as to your points of difference "and your disagreements; let us all search for the "truth, exactly as if no one was in possession of it.

"To this day the opinions which have governed the "world, having been started by chance—having been "believed in through love of novelty and a desire of "imitation—having been propagated by popular en-"thusiasm and ignorance—have in a measure usurped "clandestinely their imperial power.

"It is now time, if they are well founded, to give "a character of solemnity to their certainty, and to "legitimate their existence.

"Let us summon them to-day for the purpose of a "general examination; let a representative from each "people lay his belief before us, so that, as the whole "assembly thus constitutes itself the judge of the dif- "ferent beliefs laid before it, that belief will be acknow- "ledged to be the only true one which is so with "respect to the whole human race."

The right of speaking was then, from their position, granted to the first group on the left. "It is quite im- "possible to doubt," began the speakers, "that our doc- "trine is not the only true one, the only infallible one. "In the first place, it was revealed by God himself..."

"But," cried out all the other groups, "ours was so "too; no one dare doubt of that."

"At least you must give us some proofs of it," said the lawgiver; "for we cannot believe what we "do not know to be the case."

"Our doctrine is proved," rejoined the first group, "by numberless *facts*, by a host of miracles, by the "resurrection of the dead, by the drying up of rivers, "by the moving of mountains, &c."

"But," broke in all the other groups, "we too have "a multitude of miracles to tell of," and they began, every one of them, to tell the most incredible things.

"These miracles," said the first group, "are either "fancied prodigies or tricks of the evil spirit, who "has deceived you."

"No!" replied they; "but yours are the fancied "miracles." And each group, speaking for itself, began

to cry out, "Our miracles only are true miracles; all "others are altogether false."

So the lawgiver said, "Have you, any of you, any "witnesses, who were themselves eye-witnesses of these "things?"

"No," replied they; "these facts happened long ago; "the eye-witnesses are dead, but they have written "down their testimony."

"Granted," said the lawgiver; "but if that evidence "is contradictory, who can now reconcile one part of it "with another?"

"Just judge!" cried out one of the groups, "the proof "that our witnesses saw what they state they saw lies "in the fact that they lost their lives from testifying to "the truth of their assertions. Our belief has been "sealed with the blood of the martyrs."

"Martyrs!" cried out all the other groups. "We "have had thousands of them, who died in the most "frightful torments, with the utmost constancy."

Then Christians of all sects, Mussulmans, Indians, and Japanese, cited endless instances of confessors, martyrs, penitents, &c.

Here one of the groups denied that the martyrs of the other groups were martyrs at all. "Well," said they, "*we*, *too*, are quite ready to die to prove that "our belief is the true one."

And on the instant a crowd of men of every religion and of every sect rushed forward to suffer torture and death; many of them began to tear their arms, to strike their heads and breasts, without giving any sign of the pain they were suffering.

But the lawgiver cried out, "Stop, stop! Hearken

" calmly to my words. If you are ready to die in order
" to prove that two and two make four, will that in any
" way help them to make four ?"

"No," answered they all.

"And if you are ready to die in order to prove that
" they make five, will that enable them to make five ?"

"No," said they all again.

"Well, then, what does your being firmly persuaded
" of anything prove, if the actual state of the case re-
" mains quite unchanged, whatever your persuasion be.
" Your opinions as to what is true are different, but
" what is true remains true for all that; therefore, many
" amongst you are mistaken; but if, as is quite evident,
" these last are completely convinced of the truth of the
" errors into which they have fallen, what can a man's
" firm persuasion prove, for it may be right or it may be
" wrong? If error has reckoned its martyrs, where
" shall we look for the seal of truth? If the evil spirit
" can work miracles, what becomes of the distinctive
" prerogative of the Divinity? Besides, why must we
" always listen to incomplete and insufficient miracles?
" Why are not the opinions of mankind changed instead
" of the laws of nature being violated? Why are men
" frightened and killed, instead of being instructed and
" improved? Oh! credulous and yet stubborn mortals!
" none of us are certain as to what happened yesterday,
" as to what is happening to-day before our eyes; yet
" we are ready to swear to what took place two thousand
" years ago. Weak and yet proud men! hear me. The
" laws of nature are unchangeable and comprehensive;
" our minds are full of whims and fancies, and we wish
" to be able to demonstrate everything, to understand

"everything; yet, in truth, it is easier for the whole "human race to be deceived than for us to change the "nature of one atom of matter."

"Well," said a doctor, "let us leave on one side our "proofs as to facts, as there may be, perhaps, doubts "raised as to these, and let us take the proofs derived "from reasoning—those which are inherent in our doc- "trines themselves."

Then an iman of the law of Mahommed advanced full of confidence into the arena, and, having first turned himself towards Mecca, and having then made an emphatic declaration of faith, "Praised be God," said he, with a grave and sonorous voice, "the light carries "its evidence in its brightness, and the truth does not "need examination." And then showing the Koran, "Here are the light and the truth in their very essence. "Who can doubt this book? It leads all on the right "road who walk as if they were blind, who receive with- "out question the Divine word, revealed to the Prophet, "in order to save the simple and confound the wise. "God has established Mahommed as his minister upon "earth. He has given over the world into his hands, so "that those who refuse to believe in God's Prophet may "be conquered by the sword. The infidels dispute the "fact, and cannot believe it; their hardness of heart "comes from God himself; he has hardened their hearts, "in order to give them over to dreadful torments. . ."

Here much murmuring arose on all sides and interrupted the orator. "Who is this fellow," cried out all the groups, "who thus gratuitously insults us? "By what right does he impose his belief on us as a con- "queror and a tyrant. Did not God give us, as well as

"him, eyes to see with, a soul, and an understanding?
"And have we not as good a right to use them as he
"has, to know what we should reject and what we
"should believe? If he has the right to attack us, have
"not we the right to defend ourselves? If he has
"chosen to believe what he does without any ex-
"amination, have not we the power of believing or
"not believing, as we please, after due considera-
"tion?"

"And of what nature can this luminous doctrine be
"which dreads the light so much? What kind of man
"can this apostle of the merciful God be, when he
"preaches nothing but murder and bloodshed? What
"kind of Divinity can the God be who punishes the
"blindness which he has himself caused? If violence
"and persecution are such good arguments in the cause
"of truth, are mildness and charity to be taken as argu-
"ments to show that people are in error?"

Just then a man, advancing from a neighbouring group towards the iman, said to him, "Admitting
"that Mahommed is the apostle of the best doctrine,
"the prophet of the one true religion, will you tell us
"whom we ought now to follow in order to practise its
"rites? Are we to follow the son-in-law Ali, or the
"vicars Omar and Abubeker?"

He had scarcely pronounced these names when a terrible schism took place in the very centre of the Mussulman group; the partisans of Omar and Ali, calling each other heretics, impious men, sacrilegious wretches, cursed and swore dreadfully. The quarrel became so violent that the neighbouring groups had to interfere to prevent the Mussulmans coming to blows.

At last, a little tranquillity having been established the lawgiver addressed the imans:—"See what con-"sequences result from your principles! If men were "to put them in practice, by constant battles amongst "yourselves you would destroy each other till but one "was left; and the first law of God, is it not that one "which proclaims that men should be allowed to live?" Then, turning to the other groups, "Without doubt," said he, this "spirit of intolerance and exclusiveness "shocks all our ideas of justice; it overthrows the "basis of all morals and social laws. Yet, before we "absolutely reject this code of doctrine, would it not "be wise to hear some of its dogmas, in order that we "may not pronounce on its mere forms only, without "any knowledge of its principles?"

And the groups having given their consent, the iman began by declaring that God, having sent twenty-four thousand prophets to the nations who lived in the errors of idolatry, finally sent one as the last, as the seal and the perfection of them all. This prophet was Mahommed, "On whose name may the salutation "of peace rest;" then, in order that infidels should not dare to alter the Word of God, the supreme mercy of God had itself deigned to write the pages of the Kôran; and, going over the various dogmas of his faith, the iman explained how, owing to its title of the Word of God, the Kôran was itself uncreated and eternal, as the God from whom it emanated; how it had been delivered to Mahommed leaf by leaf by the Angel Gabriel himself, in twenty-four thousand separate visits paid during the night; how the angel announced his arrival by a little jingling sound, which

always threw the Prophet into a cold sweat; how Mahommed, in a vision of the night, had passed through ninety regions of heaven, mounted on the beast Borack, which was half horse, half woman; how, endowed with the gift of working miracles, he could walk in the sun without any shadow, he could cover the trees with leaves by a single word, he could fill the wells and cisterns with water; how he split in two the disc of the moon; in short, Mahommed had propagated, sword in hand, the religion the most worthy of God on account of its great sublimity, and the most suitable for men on account of the simplicity of its teaching, since it consisted in but observing eight or ten rules, to profess the unity of God, to recognise Mahommed as his greatest prophet, to pray five times a day, to fast one month during the year, to go to Mecca once in a lifetime, to give away the tenth part of what you possess; not to drink wine, not to eat pork, and to make war on infidels; by such means as these each Mussulman became himself an apostle and a martyr; he enjoyed even in this world a host of advantages, and at his death his soul would be weighed in the scale of men's works, and be absolved by two black angels; it would then pass the bridge over hell, a bridge which is as narrow as a hair and as sharp as a sabre; and, finally, it would be received into a paradise of delights, watered with rivers of milk and honey, scented with all the perfumes of India and Arabia, where the ever-chaste virgins, the houris of heaven, heap never-ceasing caresses on the faithful, never wearied of receiving them.

At these words an involuntary burst of laughter

took place, and all the groups, while discussing the articles of this belief, began to cry out, "How can "reasonable beings listen to such dreams as these? "We could fancy that this iman was reading us a "chapter of the 'Arabian Nights!'

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"The proof," said a Catholic theologian, "that the "religion of Mohammed was not revealed by God is in "the fact that nearly all the ideas which form the basis "of that religion existed long before it was heard "of; it is only a confused mixture of our own holy "religion and that of the Jews, the great truths we "teach having been altered to suit the ends of an am- "bitious man, with worldly views and an insatiable "desire of power. Examine his book, and you will find "nothing in it but stories from the Bible and the Evan- "gelists, turned into absurd tales, or a tissue of vague "and contradictory declamation, with here and there a "ridiculous or a dangerous precept. Analyse these "precepts and the conduct of the apostle himself, and "you will find portrayed before you a cunning and "daring character, who, to arrive at his own ends, could "excite, most skilfully it is true, the passions of the "people whom he wished to govern. He speaks to "simple and credulous men, so he has prodigies ready "for them; they are ignorant and jealous of any supe- "rior knowledge, so he flatters their vanity by despising "knowledge; they are poor and covetous, so he "excites their cupidity by the hope of pillage; he has "nothing to give them on this earth, so he creates "treasures in heaven for them; he teaches them to "long for death as the greatest benefit; he threatens

"cowards with hell; he promises paradise to the "brave; he strengthens the weak by the doctrine of "fatalism; in a word, he produces the devotion "necessary to his cause by every attraction which can "allure the senses and touch the springs of feeling in "the hearts of his votaries.

"How different is the character of the doctrine which "we teach? And what a proof of its heavenly origin "may we not draw from its imperial power, throned on "the denial of all our natural inclinations, on the very "ruin of all human passions? How its mild morality, "sympathising with all, and its affections set on things "above, testify to its having emanated from the Divi-"nity! Many of our dogmas, it is true, are above human "understanding, and must be received in respectful "silence by our reason, but a Divine revelation is only "more clearly established by this, for unaided mortals "could never even have imagined such mysteries." Then, holding in one hand the Bible and in the other the four Evangelists, the doctor began by declaring that in the beginning God, having previously passed an eternity of time without doing anything, at last, without any known motive, undertook the task of producing the world out of nothing; that, having created the whole universe in six days, He rested on the seventh; that He placed the first pair of mortals in a paradise, to make them perfectly happy, but that He forbid them to taste some fruit which He left in their power; that our first parents yielded to the temptation, and that all their progeny (none of them being even born at the time) were at once condemned to suffer for a fault which they had not committed; that

then, having allowed the human race to be damned for four or five thousand years, this merciful God had ordered his well-beloved Son, begotten without a mother, and of the same age as his Father, to descend on the earth in order to be there put to death, and this in order to save men the greater part of whom, even since that sacrifice, wilfully continued to throw away their souls; that to remedy such an inconvenient state of things, this God, born of a woman who continued a virgin, after He had once died and risen again, rose each day afresh, and, under the form of a little leaven, multiplied Himself thousands of times at the bidding of the lowest of mankind. Then passing on to the doctrine of the sacraments, he was about to treat of the power of loosing and unloosing from its very origin, of the means of giving absolution for all crimes by some water and a few words, when, having used the words "indulgence and power of the "Pope," he was interrupted by a Babel of cries. "Hor- "rible abuse!" called out the Lutherans, "to pretend to "receive payment for giving men absolution from their "sins." "It is contrary to the text of the Evangelists," said the Calvinists, "to suppose the real presence." "The "Pope can decide nothing by himself," said the Jansenists. And as about thirty sects began to talk all at once, as they accused each other of heresy and error, it was impossible to understand what was said.

After a little time, silence being restored, the Mussulman said to the lawgiver, "You refused our "doctrine, because you said it contained incredible "things. Can you admit the doctrine of the Christians?

"Is it not much more contrary to common sense and "justice? God, the immaterial, the infinite, to become a "man—to have a Son as old as Himself—this Son to "become bread, which men eat and digest—have we "anything like that in our religion? Have Christians "the exclusive right of requiring a blind belief in their "dogmas? Will you give them any particular privi- "leges, to our disadvantage?"

Some savages here advanced. "What!" said they, "do you mean to say that because a man and a woman, "six thousand years ago, eat an apple, the whole human "race is to be damned? Do you call God a just "being? Was there ever a tyrant who made children "responsible for the faults of their parents? Can one "man be made answerable for the sins of another? Is not "this overturning all our ideas of justice and reason?"

"And where," said many others, "are the witnesses, "where are the proofs, of all these supposed facts, which "you have stated? Can we receive them thus without "any examination? In our courts of justice we require "two witnesses to prove the most trifling matter, and "are you going to make us believe all this on the faith "of traditions—of mere hearsay?"

Here a rabbi began:—"As for these facts, we Jews "can warrant them to be true in the main; with regard "to the way they are told, and the use that is made "of them, the case is quite different, and the Christians "stand condemned by their own arguments, for they "cannot deny that we are the original source which they "spring from, we are the old stock on which they are "grafted; and from this we draw a direct argument— "either our law is the law of God, and then their law is

"a heresy, as it differs from ours; or our law is not the "law of God, and then their law shares the fate of ours."

"We must draw a distinction here," said the Christian. "Your law is the law of God, but it is a "figurative and preparatory law, not final and absolute "in its nature; you are but the type of that reality "which we represent."

"We know well," said the rabbi, "what your "pretensions are; but they have no foundation in "fact, and are absolutely false. Your system rests "altogether on the basis of mystical meanings, "visionary and allegorical interpretations; and this "system, doing violence to what our books actually "say, is ever substituting the most chimerical ideas "in place of the plain meaning, so that you can find "anything that suits you, as the wandering imagi-"nation can picture figures for itself in the clouds. "For instance, you have made a spiritual Messiah of "one who, in our prophecies, strictly interpreted, was to "be but a political king; you have made the redemption "of the human race out of what was but the restoration "of our own people; you have founded the pretended "conception of the virgin on a phrase which had quite "a different meaning; you establish what you like "according to your own wish, just as it suits you; you "can even find in our books the idea of the Trinity, "although there is not the slightest allusion to it con-"tained in them, although it is evidently an idea bor-"rowed from heathen nations, and admitted with a "crowd of others of every form of worship and every "sect, all of which combined to form your system in the "chaos and anarchy of your first three centuries."

At this instant the Christian doctors, filled with fury, and crying out "Blasphemer! sacrilegious wretch!" longed to dart upon the Jew, while some monks in black and white robes advanced, bearing a standard, on which were painted some pincers, a gridiron, and a stake and faggots, with these words underneath them:—"Justice, "Charity, and Mercy." "We must," said they, "make "an auto-da-fé of these impious wretches, and burn them "for the glory of God;" and they began at once to draw out the ground for a pile of faggots; but here the Mussulmans cried out ironically, "Behold the religion "of peace! Behold that humble and benevolent mo- "rality which you boasted of so much to us! Behold "the evangelical charity which only combats unbelief by "its mildness, and meets injuries with patience instead "of violence! Hypocrites! it is thus that you deceive "the world, it is thus that you propagate error with the "worst consequences; when you are weak, you preach "liberty, tolerance, and peace; when you are strong, "you practise persecution and violence." And they were going to begin a history of wars and murders, all to be laid to the charge of Christianity, but the lawgiver stopped this discordant noise to let the monks speak. "We do not wish to avenge ourselves," said they, with the humblest and softest voice possible; "we do not "wish to avenge ourselves, but the cause of God; it is "His glory which we wish to defend." "And by what "right," said the imans, "do you constitute yourselves "His especial representatives? Have you any privileges "that we have not also? Are you different men in any "way from us?" "Defend God!" said another group; "pretend to avenge Him!" Is not that a direct insult to

"His wisdom, to His power? Does God not know
"better than men can what becomes His dignity?"
"Yes," said the monks, "but His ways are hidden!"
"And," broke in the rabbis, "you Christians have to
"show that you alone possess the privilege of under-
"standing them." Then the Jews, rejoicing in the help
of the imans, thought their law was to triumph; but
the high priest of the Parsees asked the lawgiver for
leave to speak. "We have heard the recital of the
"Jews and the Christians concerning the origin of the
"world, and we recognise in it many things that we admit,
"although in somewhat a different form, but we cannot
"allow these doctrines to be attributed to the Hebrew
"prophet Moses. In the first place, because it cannot be
"clearly proved that the books inscribed with his name
"were really written by him; on the contrary, we can
"show by twenty direct passages that the arrangement
"of these books in their present form took place at least
"six centuries after his time, and that this arrangement
"was the result of connivance between a high priest
"and a king; in the second place, because, if you ex-
"amine with attention the series of laws, rites, and pre-
"cepts, supposed to come directly from Moses, you will
"there find no indication (not even a hint) of the theo-
"logical doctrine which the Jews, and their offspring,
"the Christians, profess at the present day. You will
"find nowhere a trace of the immortality of the soul or
"another life, nor of heaven or hell, nor of the revolt of
"that angel who was the principal author of human
"woe. Moses had never heard of such ideas as these,
"and the reason given for it is most convincing, for it
"was rather more than two centuries after his time that

"our prophet Zoroaster preached this doctrine through-
"out Asia; so," said the Parsee, addressing the rabbi,
"it is only since the era of Zoroaster that these ideas
"appear in the Hebrew writings; they show themselves
"very slowly, and at first in rather a furtive way, ac-
"cording to the political relations which subsisted be-
"tween our respective ancestors. When your fore-
"fathers were conquered and scattered by the kings of
"Nineveh and Babylon, they were carried off to the
"banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates, and their de-
"scendants, being brought up for three successive gene-
"rations in our country, became impregnated with cus-
"toms and opinions which they would have refused to
"receive, as contrary to their law, had their captivity
"never taken place. When our king Cyrus freed them
"from slavery, they were full of gratitude, and became
"our imitators and our disciples. The distinguished
"Jewish families, whom the kings of Babylon had
"caused to be instructed in Chaldæan science, brought
"with them on their return to Jerusalem some new
"ideas, some foreign dogmas. At first these met with
"opposition from the mass of the people, who had not
"emigrated. The letter of their law was contrary to
"them, Moses was absolutely silent about them, but
"the doctrine of the Pharisees, or Parsees, prevailed,
"and a new sect sprang up, modified by your genius
"and ideas peculiarly your own. You expect a king a
"restorer of your power; we announce a God a
"restorer and a saviour. From this combina-
"tion of ideas your Essenians drew the basis of
"Christianity; and whatever be your pretensions,
"Jews, Christians, and Mussulmans, you are only dis-

"ciples of Zoroaster, who have wandered out of your way."

Then the Parsee recounted the creation of the world in six gahâns; the making of the first man and woman in a paradise, where all was good; the introduction of evil into the world by the great viper, emblem of Ahriman; the revolt of this genius of evil, and his combats with Ormuzd, the principle of good and light; the division of angels into the white and the black, the good and the bad, their hierarchical order, to wit, cherubims, seraphims, thrones, and dominations; the end of the world, to come in six thousand years; the arrival of the lamb who was to be the restorer of nature; the new world; the future life in a place of happiness or misery; the passage of souls over the bridge of the abyss; the mysteries of the Mythras; the unleavened bread which the initiated eat; the baptism of newly born infants; the confession of sins, and the extreme unction of the dead; in a word, the Parsee went over so many things to be found in the three preceding religions that his discourse might have been a commentary on the Apocalypse or the Kôran.

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"Oh!" said the Brahmins, "if we were but per-
"mitted to reveal our mysteries to profane men! If a
"sacred veil did not cover our doctrine from all curious
"eyes!" and they were silent; but a European scholar said, "I can read these men's books, and I can tell you
"what their principles are." So with the four Vedas, the eighteen Purans, and the six Chastras, in his hands, he began by relating how a being who was immaterial, in-

finite, eternal, and a circle, had passed an unlimited time in the contemplation of himself; but, wishing to manifest his power had begotten, three other divinities, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siveen, the first as a creator, the second as a preserver, the third as a destroyer or changer of form. The scholar then went on to give an account of the operations of these divinities; how Brahma, proud of having created the world and the eight spheres of the purifications, wished to take precedence over his equal Siveen, and how a combat took place between the two, which broke celestial bodies as if they had been a basket of eggs; how Brahma, having been conquered in the combat, had to serve as a foot-stool to Siveen; how Vishnu, the god-mediator, had taken at different times nine mortal forms of different animals in order to save the world; how at first, under the form of a fish, he saved from the universal deluge one family to repeople the earth; how, under the form of a tortoise, he drew the mountain Mandroguiri, pole of the earth, out of a sea of milk; how, under the form of a wild boar, he ripped up the belly of the giant who had submerged the earth in the depths of Djola; how, under the form of a black shepherd and under the name of Crisen, he delivered the world from the venomous serpent Calengam, and, after having been bitten in the heel, had bruised the serpent's head.

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Here a lama asked leave to declare his doctrine:—"In "the beginning one God, existing by Himself, after "having passed an unlimited time in the contempla- "tion of His own existence, determined to manifest "His perfections by creating matter. That the four

"elements were first produced, but while they were "still in a state of confusion God breathed upon the "waters, which swelled up into an immense bubble of "the shape of an egg, which, as it spread, became the "vault of heaven and the universe of sky, which sur- "rounds the world; that this God, Himself the "very essence of motion, having created the earth "and the bodies of the creatures which were to "dwell in it, infused into these last a portion of His "own existence to give them life; that in this way "the soul of everything that breathes is but a portion "of the universal soul of the Divinity, and therefore "can never die, but changes its form and former mould "by animating bodies of different kinds; that of all "these forms the one which pleases the Divine Being "most is that of man, as being the most similar to His "own perfection; that when a man, by separating "himself absolutely from all his natural inclinations, "becomes absorbed in the contemplation of himself, "he finds the Divinity in his own mind, and becomes "a divinity himself; that amongst the incarnations of "this kind which God had manifested Himself by, "one of the most holy and most solemn took place "twenty-eight centuries ago, when He appeared under "the name of Budh, to teach the doctrine of no personal "immortality and the denial of self." Then going over the history of Budh, the lama said that he was born of a virgin of direct royal descent, who had still continued a virgin; that the king of the country, being uneasy about his birth, wished to put him out of the way, and that he massacred all the male children born at that time; that Budh, having been saved by some

shepherds, lived in the desert till he was thirty years old, when he commenced his mission, which was to enlighten men and to deliver them from devils; that he performed a host of astonishing miracles; that he lived in a state of fasting and severe penance; that he left a book to His disciples which contained His doctrine. Here the lama began to read:—"He who abandons "his father and mother to follow me, becomes a per- "fect disciple. He who practises my precepts to the "fourth degree of perfection, gains the power of flying "in the air, of moving heaven and earth, of prolonging "or shortening life.

"The perfect disciple rejects riches, and only uses "what is absolutely necessary; he mortifies his body; "his passions must be dumb; he wants nothing, he "attaches himself to nothing; he meditates without "ceasing on my doctrine; he suffers injuries with "patience; he has no hatred against his neighbour. "Heaven and earth shall perish; despise, therefore, "your bodies, which are composed of four corruptible "elements, and think only of your immortal souls. "Hearken not to the promptings of the flesh; the "passions produce fear and remorse; extinguish your "passions, and you will know no fear, you will suffer "no remorse. He who dies without having embraced "my religion returns amongst mankind till he does so." The lama was going on when the Christians interrupted him, crying out that he was tampering with their religion; that Budh was only Christ Himself under another form, and that the lamas were certainly Nestorians and Manichæans of the worst sort, though disguised as lamas.

But the lama, supported by the chamans, bonzes, gonnises, and talapins of Siam, Ceylon, Japan, and China, proved to the Christians—by their own authors, too—that the doctrine of Budh was spread over the East more than a thousand years before the time of Christ; that his name was well known before the time of Alexander; and, turning the tables on the Christians, they cried out, "Can you prove to us now that you are "not yourselves degenerate disciples of Budh, and that "the founder of your sect was not an imitator of his? "Prove to us by historical documents that Christ lived "at the precise epoch you state that He lived, for in the "absence of any authentic testimony we deny the fact, "and we declare that your Gospels are only books "belonging to the Mithriacques of Persia and the "Syrian Essenians, who were reformed Budhists."

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At these words a general murmur burst forth amongst all the theologians present, of whatever sect they were—"Such doctrine is pure materialism; those "who profess it are infidels and atheists; they are "enemies of God, and the sooner we extirpate such "wretches the better." "Well," cried out the bonzes, "granted that we are completely in error—for one of "the first qualities of the mind of man is his liability to "being deceived—by what right can you deprive men "like yourselves of the life which God has given them? "If God considers us guilty, and has such a horror of "us as you say, why does He distribute His benefits to "us as well as to you? If He treats us with tolerance, "can you, with any justice, be less tolerant than He is? "Pious men, who speak of God with such certainty and

"precision, pray tell us what God is; make us under-
"stand what these abstract and metaphysical beings are
"which you call God and soul, substance without
"matter, existence without body, life without organism?
"If you have any knowledge of such beings through
"your senses, make them perceptible to us; but if you
"only speak on hearsay and the authority of traditions,
"at least show us some consistent account of things,
"and allow our belief to rest on some fixed and
"identical basis."

Then a great controversy arose about God and the nature of God, on the nature of His government and His manifestations; on the nature of the soul and its union with the body; on the future life and the new world; and as each separate sect, each school, and each individual, differed on all these points, and gave very plausible reasons for doing so, citing most respectable yet contradictory authorities, the whole assembly got involved in an inextricable labyrinth of difficulties.

* * * * *

THEOLOGY.

THEOLOGY, FROM GEORGE COOMBE.

The name given to the intellectual ideas which enter into the composition of religion is theology. It means the notions which we form concerning the Being to whom, or the objects to which, our reverential and devotional emotions should be directed.

> "Lo the poor Indian! whose untutored mind
> Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind."

This is the theology of the Indian. The Hindoos and Mahomedans have embodied their theology, in other words, their notions concerning the objects to be reverenced and worshipped, in books. The emotional faculties of the people being trained to reverence, as Divine revelations, the narratives and dogmas which these books contain, the compound becomes in their minds religion. Hence an individual may be highly religious, and know nothing of theology beyond the narratives and dogmas which have been entwined with his religious emotions from his infancy; while another may be a profound theologian, acquainted with the

original languages of Scripture, skilled in all the controversies which have taken place concerning the authors by whom its different parts were written, the time and order of their appearance, their title to the attribute of inspiration, and the true meaning of their texts, yet not be religious.

In point of fact experience shows that in many instances the more an individual knows of these subjects, the less religious, in the common acceptation of the word, he becomes, *i. e.* his reverence for the special dogmas and observances which in his youth he was trained to regard with religious awe diminishes.

The difference between religion and theology, which I have here endeavoured to indicate, may be further illustrated by comparing them to the warp and woof of a web. The weaver fixes in his loom first, long threads stretching out directly from his own position, and these are called the warp; then he puts thread upon a shuttle, which he ever and anon casts between the long threads, and these cross threads are called the woof. The web or cloth is composed of two series of threads closely pressed together. Now, in our present problem the native sentiment of reverence and devotion may be likened to the warp. It is the foundation or first element of the web. The theological ideas may be considered as the cross threads or woof. As the shuttle adds the woof to the warp to make the cloth, the intellect adds theology, or particular notions about God to the emotion, and the two combined constitute what we commonly call religion.

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The primitive emotion when energetic and excited

is so overpowering that it carries the whole mind captive. When it acts blindly, it dethrones reason, stifles conscience, and enlists every passion to vindicate the honour and glory of the Being whom it has been trained to reverence. When the woof of error has been added in infancy, and the web of superstition formed, every thread, that is to say, every notion concerning God and his priests, and man's duty to both, becomes sacred in the eyes of the devotee, and stirs the emotion into a glow of rapture if gratified, and of pain accompanied by indignation and fury, if offended. In this state of mind barbarous nations plunder and slay in honour and to the glory of their gods.

In Christian nations analogous phenomena appear. We all profess to draw our religion from the Bible; but in Scotland one woof is woven into the warp, in England another, in Ireland a third, in Germany a fourth, in Russia a fifth, and so on.

In Scotland, my own country, the woof consists of certain views of God, of human nature and of man's state, duties, and destiny, embodied in the shorter catechism, and the confession of faith. In our infancy these are woven by our parents and clergy into the very core of our religious emotion, and the resulting texture is our religion. The union is so intimate, and the web so firmly knit together, that most of us have no conception of anything being religion except this our own compound web of devotion and intellectual doctrine. The doctrine is to us as sacred as the emotion, and he who controverts it is regarded as the enemy of our religion. In barbarous ages Christian men, acting under this impression,

burned individuals who controverted their interpretations of Scripture; and in our own day they calumniate them as infidels, and obstruct their social advancement. Nevertheless, the doctrine, which they thus regard as unquestionably divine, is a mere human woof, composed of inferences drawn from particular texts of Scripture by mortal men assembled at Westminster in the seventeenth century; men fallible like ourselves, and many of them more ignorant, though its intimate union with our devotional emotion is apt to incapacitate our mind from so regarding it.

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We can now understand why it is that we are afflicted with such deadly strifes and hatred in the name of religion. "The clouds that intercept the "heavens from us, come not from the heavens, but "from the earth." The thing, which we call religion, is a compound web; and when our neighbour shows us his threads of religious opinion, and calls them Divine, we, into whose minds they have not been woven, survey his fabric with the eye of reason, and and pronounce it to be partly pure and partly spurious. Our neighbour's devotional feeling receives a rude shock: he becomes angry, and attacks our web of religion in his turn and treats it in a similar way. Neither of us, in general, is capable of examining closely and calmly the threads that constitute the woof of his own web, and hence discord between religious parties is interminable.

In the prevalent creeds, nature is not recognised as sacred; no dogmas are founded on scientific truth, and systematically combined with the religious emotions

so as to invest them with a religious character. This appears to be the true cause why no practical natural religion exists, and why none can be formed until we venture on a new religious reformation.

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MDZ Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum Digitale Bibliothek

Nicholson, N. A.

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